

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**RURAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**February 19, 2020**

**10:00 AM**

**SAP&DC Conference Room**

**Altoona, PA**

**ACTION SUMMARY**

The following are the major actions taken by the Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) at its regular meeting held on February 19, 2020, at the SAP&DC in Altoona, PA.

1. Approved the December 18, 2019, RTCC meeting minutes as presented.

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**MEETING MINUTES**

**I. Welcome**

The following members were present at the meeting:

- Commissioner Barry Dallara, Bedford County
- Commissioner Randy Bunch, Fulton County
- Commissioner Jeff Thomas, Huntingdon County
- Commissioner Colleen Dawson, Somerset County
- Frank Hampton, PennDOT Central Office
- Tom Prestash, PennDOT District 9-0
- Brandon Carson, SAP&DC
- Brandon Peters, SAP&DC

Others in attendance included:

- Tammie Hess, Representative Jesse Topper Office
- Commissioner Gerald Walker, Somerset County
- Vince Greenland, PennDOT District 9-0
- Dave Lybarger, PennDOT District 9-0
- Anne Stich, PennDOT District 9-0
- Matthew Bjorkman, SAP&DC
- Zachary Lee, SAP&DC
- Janice Streightiff, SAP&DC

Each participant received a meeting packet that included:

- Agenda
- December 18, 2019 RTCC Meeting Minutes
- Critical Rural Freight Corridor Refined Final Listings – Tradeoff Analysis
- FY 2019-2022 Southern Alleghenies RPO TIP Adjustments
- 2021 Program Development Schedule
- Southern Alleghenies RPO Minority Populations Map
- Southern Alleghenies RPO Low Income Populations Map
- PA Statewide Procedures for 2021-2024 TIP and TIP Revisions MOU

- FY 2020 PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund Projects
- Johnstown Urban Industrial Park Connector Street Map

## **II. Review and Approval of the December 18, 2019 RTCC Meeting Minutes**

Tom Prestash welcomed the committee to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves as there were a few new members. Brandon Carson conducted roll call. Tom asked the committee to review the December 18, 2019, meeting minutes included in the packet.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Jeff Thomas made a motion to approve the December 18, 2019, RTCC meeting minutes as presented. Frank Hampton seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **III. Corridor N U.S. 219 Study Update**

### January 31<sup>st</sup> Listening Sessions Summary

Brandon Peters informed the committee that the first set of listening sessions were held the end of January. Justin Scott from Metro Analytics, Inc. was on the phone to review the sessions with the committee. They began with the Legislative Breakfast in the morning followed by the Greater Cumberland Meeting in Meyersdale, where they had a great discussion with people who have a long history with the project, and finally the five stakeholder sessions in the afternoon. Stakeholders included representatives from PennDOT, MDOT, Industry, Economic Development, and Workforce. Justin added that these meetings went incredibly well. Topics discussed included the corridors regional significance, design features or corridor improvements that could enhance the value of the project, and key economic development strategies in the region that will eventually fit into a grant narrative for this project. Investments and policies that could complement the project were also discussed. They are now beginning to meet with local business leaders to discuss their major trading, logistic, and supply chain needs, and how this project could support those needs. He reviewed the project schedule noting that they will be completing the project deliverables sometime in the middle of May.

Justin also informed the committee that he has accepted another position and will be leaving Metro Analytics, Inc. Matt Preisler will be taking his place. Matt introduced himself and added that Justin has been briefing him on the project. He added that he has family in Somerset County and is familiar with the area. He will send his contact information to Brandon.

Tom added that MDOT is also doing a cost benefit analysis study and should have the results in March. This study together with that one will truly give a more complete picture of progress on the corridor and what its completion could bring for the region. He talked to acting Secretary Gramian and she is more than willing to come down to Somerset to talk about Route 219 but wants those two pieces of information.

He also noted that there is a Senate Appropriations Bill for Appalachia with \$100M. Each state should receive around \$30M. In the 2020 appropriations bill, PA is getting \$0. Deputy Secretary Shifflet is meeting with ARC to try and get them to relook at our position and see if there is any leeway or reinterpretation of that language. He will keep everyone up to date on what he finds out. There is an opportunity to obtain a portion 2021 ARC appropriations.

#### **IV. FY 2019-2022 TIP Modifications and Amendments**

Dave Lybarger reviewed the FY 2019-2022 TIP modifications with the committee answering any questions they had. There were no amendments requiring a vote.

#### **V. FY 2021-2024 Draft TIP**

Brandon Peters informed the committee staff is currently working on the Environmental Justice portion of the FY 2021-2024 Draft TIP. The next step will be the public comment period, which will include outreach meetings in each of the four rural counties. The Draft TIP will then be approved at the May 13, 2020, meeting. Commissioner Thomas added that Huntingdon County has hired a new Planning Director, James P. Lettiere. He will send his contact information to Brandon. PennDOT added that they will reach out and meet with him. The FY 2021-2024 Draft TIP is expected to be adopted at the July 22, 2020, meeting.

Matthew Bjorkman informed the committee that he and Brandon Peters attended the Environmental Justice (EJ) Workshop in Cranberry Township on February 6<sup>th</sup>. He reviewed the EJ guidelines as well as the maps showing the identified areas for low income and minority populations. Brandon Peters noted that Mount Union has a significant minority population, but Somerset Township and Smithfield Township do not have what the map represents. Smithfield and SCI prisons skew the results in these areas. Commissioner Dawson added that there is a Hispanic community in Somerset County. Matt offered to send the information to the committee members if they would like it. He also reviewed the data on the distribution of poor bridges, pedestrian and bicycle crashes, and the benefits and burdens analysis.

#### **Modifications and Amendments Memorandum of Understanding**

Brandon Peters noted that the RPO reviews the thresholds that trigger various actions every TIP. Earlier at this meeting, David Lybarger reviewed the current modifications. The current threshold is \$2M and none met that threshold. He did note that if a project is added or removed, that does require approval. The committee agreed that the current thresholds work well and decided to make no changes. PennDOT will draft the MOU and bring it to the next meeting for approval.

## **VI. Other Business**

### 2019 Southern Alleghenies Trail Report

Matthew Bjorkman and Zachary Lee put together a trail report based on the data collected with SAP&DC's ten trail counters over the last year. The hope when SAP&DC purchased the counters was to have data to support applications when requests came in. Brandon reviewed the locations of the trail counters and showed some photographs. One counter was lost due to vandalism on the Top Trail in Fulton County. He reviewed the data collected with the committee. Staff can generate reports for committee members should they need it. Frank asked if the trail report was on SAP&DC's website. Brandon said it can be put on the website. Counters can be moved if there is a particular need. There is currently one counter in reserve. There was a discussion at the RTTC about sharing the data and seeing if other organizations would share their data as well. Karl King, Blair County Rails to Trails, is a member of the RTTC and said he would be willing to share their trail data. This report will be completed annually as part of the Southern Alleghenies UPWP.

### PennDOT Multimodal Applications

Five applications were submitted within the RPO and staff provided comment to PennDOT Central Office, who will make the final decision. Brandon reviewed the applications with the group answering any questions they had.

### JRA Access Road Award

The Johnstown Urban Industrial Park Connector Street ARC application was submitted in November of 2019 and approved the end of December. This \$1.3M project makes better use of the Rosedale Mining property, which was a brownfield site. This project will impact the downtown Johnstown area by connecting it to 80 acres of developable land. Phase one of the project was funded through PennDOT Multimodal funds to complete the first part of the road; this application was for phase two, which continues the road back to the 80 acres of developable land.

SAP&DC staff is starting to pull together projects for the next ARC funding cycle. No match is required, these projects can be 100% federal funds. Contact SAP&DC staff with any possible projects.

Commissioner Thomas expressed concern with a safety issue at the Huntingdon County Career and Technical Center. The school purchased a lot across the street for additional parking. The traffic pulls up so far at that intersection that the students are forced to cross between the cars. Traffic also comes around the corner there almost hitting the students. There is a "STOP Here" sign but everyone pulls on up so they can see to turn. There is also a drainage issued there causing icy conditions in the winter. The intersection is Big Valley Pike and Walnut Street in the Borough of Millcreek. He wondered if maybe a crosswalk would help. PennDOT agreed to take a look at it. He gave them the contacts for the school.

A group with the means and expertise purchased the Broad Top Railroad and plans to open it back up to Colgate Road. They are discussing eventually extending it to Mount Union and Saltillo over the next few years. Commissioner Thomas wanted to put it on PennDOT's

radar. Tom suggested maybe PennDOT should set up a meeting with them to see what their vision is.

#### Critical Rural Freight Corridor Discussion

Tom reminded the committee that they previously designated part of Route 219 a Critical Rural Freight Corridor, but Meyersdale to the county line, although originally submitted, was not added. Maryland has designated their portion of the proposed Route 219 a Critical Freight Corridor and it would greatly help a USDOT INFRA application if the RPO designated the remaining 9.7 miles of Route 219 on the Pennsylvania side as well. Additional miles cannot be added without removing the equivalent; the total of 62.5 miles in the RPO must remain the same. PennDOT and SAP&DC staff have been in discussions to determine what the best options would be. Commissioner Walker noted that Route 219 is gaining a lot of momentum right now. We currently have Maryland's help to be able to complete the Corridor down to I-65 in Maryland. The 9.7 miles includes the entire portion from north of Meyersdale to the Maryland border; 5.5 miles for construction and then 4.2 miles north of that gives total of 9.7 to designate. This designation will be important if an application for additional funding is submitted. PennDOT and SAP&DC staff has identified just under seven miles in Somerset County that could be a possibility but needs to do additional analysis over the next week or so to determine the best options for the remaining mileage. There is also an option in Bedford County on Route 56. Commissioner Dallara said he will discuss the possibilities with local legislators. An e-memo vote will be sent out to the committee once the mileage has been identified. If approved, PennDOT will submit the recommendation to FHWA for consideration. Tom gave a brief description of where we are on the Route 219 project for the new committee members.

Commissioner Dallara mentioned the gas tax issue and asked what the RPO can do to address this issue. Tom said PennDOT will be discussing this in their upcoming outreach meetings. They will cover what the needs are and why in an attempt to try and put the issue in perspective. PennDOT has to show that they are putting the funding they have to good use and not wasting it. Frank added that a letter could be submitted stating that the gas tax is not keeping up and electric cars not paying at all.

Brandon told the committee that he brought some of the broadband surveys along for committee members to take with them back to their counties and distribute. There was also a link provided in the newsletter that went out this morning to take the survey online.

Tom reminded the committee to get the word out for the 2020 Census. It costs \$2,500 for every uncounted person.

## **VII. Adjournment**

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| <p><b>NOTE:</b> The next meeting of the RTCC is scheduled for May 13, 2020, at the SAP&amp;DC beginning at 10:00 AM.</p> |
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**February 19, 2020**

**ACTION ITEMS**

| <b>Date Issued</b> | <b>Action Items</b>                   | <b>By Whom</b> | <b>Due Date</b>       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| February 19, 2020  | Post the trail report on the website. | SAP&DC staff   | Following the meeting |